

ILLNESS REPRESENTATION IN PATIENTS WITH SLEEP APNEA SYNDROME

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Introduction: Sleep apnea (SA) is a common chronic disease that leads to higher morbidity and mortality; however, illness perceptions (IP) in patients with SA remain not well explored.

Objectives: We aimed to assess the IP in patients with SA and to correlate them with the level of sleepiness, the severity of the disease and the existence of a concomitant depression.

Methods: Sixty four untreated patients investigated for sleep apnea (mean age: 54 years, sex ratio = 2/3) participated in our study.

Excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) was assessed by the ESS, the severity of the disease by the apnea/hypopnea index (AHI) and the depressive symptoms by the HADs. Illness representation was measured by the Brief Illness Perceptions Questionnaire (B-IPQ); High scores reveal a more threatening perception of the illness.

Results: In terms of cognition, our patients feel quite bothered by their symptoms (7/10) and enable to control their illness (1.3/10), but they believe that their treatment will be effective (7/10). Emotionally, they feel pretty concerned (6/10) and negatively affected by their disease (6.1/10).

We also observed that the score of the B-IPQ ($6/10 \pm 1.5$) was positively correlated to EDS ($p=0.004$), the severity of the disease ($p=0.02$) and the coexistence of a depression ($p=0.005$).

Conclusion: Several factors seem to have an impact on the vision of the sleep-apnea's patients towards their disease and their life as well. The study of the IP seems interesting to better understand the coping behaviour of such patients so that their adherence to the treatment would be improved.